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Black Women Here Organize for Action

By Janice Cobb

Every kind of Sister in the world belongs to BWOA: Old Sisters/young Sisters, fat Sisters/skinny Sisters, the poor, the not-so-poor, the famous, the infamous, from blue black to high yellow, a bouquet of Black women gather together on the second Wednesday of every month and with a minimum of parliamentary procedure conduct an orderly meeting wherein they address themselves to issues which effect their daily lives.

Black Women Organized for Action is an outgrowth of another group, Black Women Organized for Political Action — the famous vanguard of Bay Area women whose fund raising efforts lent financial stability to the political campaigns of notables such as Congressman Ron Dellums, Berkeley Mayor Warren Widner and Assemblyman Willie Brown.

BWOA emerged after several of these women felt the continuing need to focus on political and non-political issues after elections were over and the candidates in office. It has grown tremendously since its inception a year ago, into an organization of 200 distinguished ladies whose get togethers during and between meetings have led to the formation of The Sapphire Publishing Company, A successful boycott of General Mills Products, a monthly newsletter titled, "What it is" which offers, along with other features, a compilation of local job openings, and a one day political workshop

in December which drew hundreds of women from the surrounding communities.

Every three months three coordinators are elected who voluntarily conduct and administer the meetings of the general body. This flexibility has insured the maximum utilization of resources within the organization and at the same time minimized identification of the group with any one individual.

Much of BWOA's controversy has been generated by the local and national press which views it as a leader in the emergence of Black feminists organizations. In response to this the girls divided themselves into workshops one night and as reflected in the meetings minutes, "the event was preceeded, conducted and concluded amidst much shouting, flailing and fussing as well as guzzling of champagne provided by the Sapphire Publishing Company".

The eventual consensus reached is that BWOA is an action oriented group of women composed of feminists and non-feminists concerned with the political and economic development of a total Black community on all levels of the community.

Black Women Organized for Action has proven itself to be a moving force of such potential that it links together women of every size, shape and form, changing their differences into diversities and their Blackness into a binding movement towards Sisterhood.